

Space firm commits to Edinburgh with larger HQ

A BRITISH rocket developer set to become the first in half a century to launch satellites into full orbit has committed its long-term future to Edinburgh.

Skyrora has signed a five-year lease on much larger premises on Princes Street – in the heart of the city centre – moving from its current base at St. Colme Street.

The firm is aligned with the UK Government and UK Space Agency's plans to operate from a new spaceport in Scotland – and aims to provide responsive and dedicated UK-based launches.

Its commitment to the city has been heralded by the leader of the council as a clear sign of the city's attraction to 'innovating tech firms.'

With the first launches confirmed to take place as soon as 2021, Skyrora is on track with research and tests that will allow it to take satellites of up to 350 kilograms to polar and sun-synchronous orbits.

City of Edinburgh Council Leader, Adam McVey, said: "It is fantastic for the Capital to have a business like Skyrora opt to commit its HQ here.

"As the only UK-headquartered launch provider competing to send rockets into orbit from a forthcoming UK spaceport, it is a truly exciting enterprise that will draw in lots of interest in the coming years.

"This is yet another great business providing opportunities for skilled graduates and apprentices in crucial science and tech subjects.

“I wish them all the best for their office move and their continued success.”

In the coming weeks, Skyrora will make the move to its new 2008 square foot office space at 108 Princes Street.

Daniel Smith, Director of Business Development at Skyrora, said: “Edinburgh is a positive tech-hub that is drawing some of the best STEM talent in the UK.

“From here we can easily reach a number of top universities, the thriving satellite tech firms in Glasgow as well as potential future launch sites in the north of the country – and of course the rest of the world from the airport.

“Our new premises will also allow us to continue growing a multi-talented team, which will yield some amazing opportunities and include some of the UK’s first true rocket-apprenticeships and graduate placements.”

The move comes shortly after Skyrora initiated its first in a series of sub-orbital test launches north of the border.

Taking place at the Kildermorie Estate in Ross-shire, Skyrora successfully tested components with a nine-foot 2.5 metre rocket reaching an altitude of six kilometres.

The Skyrora XL vehicle is on track to become the first rocket to launch into orbit from the UK – and draws parallels with the original British orbital rocket, Black Arrow, through the proven combination of kerosene and hydrogen peroxide as a fuel source.

The rapidly growing Edinburgh-based team aims to capture its share of the fast-growing small satellite launch market and has already 3D printed two separate prototype engines for testing at other UK locations this year.

It is developing launch vehicle technology that builds on previous rocket systems with the aim of reducing the cost of

launches thanks to proven technology and advanced engineering methods.

The firm draws on Britain's launch heritage and aims to build a robust supply chain while creating new employment opportunities to inspire the next generation of talent.